

FOR FIRST TIME SINCE SOVIET UNION, UKRAINE TAKES OWNERSHIP OF SAINTS' RELICS

Chernigov, Chernigov Province, Ukraine, January 24, 2025

Photo: uoc-news.church

For the first time since the Soviet era, Ukraine took relics from the Church and placed them on its own balance sheet last year.

This was revealed by Natalia Rebrova, the head of the Ancient Chernigov National Architectural and Historical Preserve in an interview with pechera.info earlier this month.

The Ancient Chernigov Preserve includes the Holy Trinity Cathedral, which is home to the relics of Sts. Theodosy, Philaret, and Lawrence of Chernigov, which the faithful have been cut off from for more than a year.

[In November 2023](#), after examining 18 objects of the state-owned preserve, including several churches and monasteries, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine decided to close the Orthodox churches but leave the schismatic churches open. Courts have [rejected](#) the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's appeals on the matter.

The Holy Trinity Cathedral and other sacred sites were sealed, and believers can only pray near the locked church gates, leaving the fate of the relics uncertain.

In her interview, Rebrova stated that, “at the beginning of 2024, the relics of the three Chernigov saints were placed under state registration. This is the first time in Ukraine that the Ministry of Culture has made such a decision.”

“We believe that simply opening access to the relics in the museum, in the museum space—this isn't right,” Rebrova said. “The issue of the church community's use of the Trinity Cathedral needs to be resolved.”

The Information-Education Department of the UOC comments on Rebrova's words:

Of course, this statement raised more questions than explanations. First and foremost—on what grounds did the Ministry of Culture take from the Church something that never belonged to it? Repeating the shameful practice of Soviet anti-religious museums, officials are taking holy relics from believers to later decide at their

discretion whether or not to allow people to pray to them, and even charge money for it, as entrance to the museum isn't free.

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